

MR. BURTON IN THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

forgetting their ostentation in their worship of the jewels on the hand which castigate.

To give a perfect representation of such a comedy on the stage would be almost impossible, as almost every character requires a person of genius to represent it. Mr. Burton played the part of Dromio an attendant on Antipholus, and as he entered we were surprised to see him look so little in keeping with the usual idea of a slave attendant upon a gentleman of Syracuse. A mulatto-like, quick, droll, smart-looking fellow is our idea of a Sicilian slave, and of what Shakespeare intended Dromio. Mr. Burton's appearance does not by any means suit a part like this. We can fancy him personating to admiration some fat, jolly, amorous monk, or a misanthropic Falstaff. He enters, however, with such genuine gusto, and such copious grolery, and such a hearty identification with the spirit of the character that we almost forget the incongruity of appearance, and think if the slave in those days looked so much like a fine, lively, gentleman, the master must have looked somewhat of a god.

Mr. Burton has one of those happy, genial, countenances, radiant with rich humor and glowing with buoyancy, which at once go to the heart of the audience, creating a link between him and them, which is always full of pleasant incident and laughter. But such power, though the just reward of genius, is most dangerous where it intoxicates the possessor into indications against which his own good taste and feeling would after a little thought rebel. This was painfully evident when, exasperated by the fatuity of the greasy kitchen wench, he renders the indecency of the exhibition, when she stumbles on the stage, still more disgusting, by pandering with questionable propriety to a vitiated applause in pulling at her dress when on the ground. It is the least excusable, as so good an actor as Mr. Burton might well dispense with such miserable mountebankism, which degrades his art. This failing, in fact, is the damaging exception to an otherwise unexceptionable performance. We most cheerfully tribute the tribute of our admiration for the imitable drollery with which Mr. Burton invested the character of Dromio. The sheep-like air he assumes when, in reply to Adriana's question whether his master has been arrested on a bond, he answers that he was arrested on a street, was capitally done, and was a most exquisite piece of acting. His meeting with the courtesan was also marked by imitable power of drollery, and this, as well as his previous encounter with the fat woman, convulsed the audience. The final scene, on the unravelling of all the merry mistakes and blunders, leads, of course, to all sorts of fun, and the manner in which Mr. Burton recognizes and embraces his twin brother, is a thoroughly finished piece of perfect comic acting. Throughout, indeed, Mr. Burton entered fully into the spirit of Shakespeare's creation, and at the close of the performance, appeared before the curtain, accompanied by his newly discovered brother of Ephesus, who lent him a most judicious, effective and creditable support, and after acknowledging his well deserved honor, announced a repetition of the "Errors" on Saturday night.

The traveler in Italy who wishes to pay homage to genius, will pause above the grave of the Saranian poet Plautus, and read upon his tombstone these words:

"Since Plautus is dead, the theaters are closed; the scenes are mute, and vie with each other to mourn over his fate."

The tempest has stayed its step, and Time withheld his hand to leave untouched these words, which bring to the traveler's mind so beautiful a memory of the past, and such humiliating sense of the present. The vices which gave to the satire of Plautus so keen and polished an edge, still live. So live the works which they inspired, though their author flourished 200 years before the dawn of Christianity. Horace and Cicero relished him with delight. Moliere founded upon his plays his celebrated "Avaro," and "Amphitruon," and Regnard adapted his "Monsieur de la Roche" to the French, as Shakespeare adapted it to the English in his "Comedy of Errors." As Shakespeare drew many of his creations from the Italian novelists, Plautus drew his from the comedies of Greece. As Shakespeare took the "Comedy of Errors" from "Monsieur de la Roche," Plautus drew his from Menander. Plautus adapted Greek ideas to Roman fables, Shakespeare allowed Greek and Roman in his capacious gulf. Like Shakespeare, Plautus had to avoid offending the sensitive prejudice of courts—for courts and aristocracies are ever the same, whether seated at St. James's or in the Capitol of the Consuls, as in Plautus's time. Shakespeare, like Plautus, was obliged to strike indirectly at the vices of his day, in the person of some foreigner, and through an Italian, Greek or Roman comicalist, dealt his blows on every side at the folly and meanness and wickedness around him. Hence, many of those shafts which appear without point, in our own time, were keenly aimed and keenly appreciated at the time they left his quiver. Thus, when Dromio says, in reference to the greasy kitchen wench, "If she lives till doomsday, she will turn a week longer than the whole world," he alluded, and all understood it, the allusion to a false day of the day, who was as little in soul as large in person, and universally despised. Adriana was a hit also upon a woman of the day, whose jealousy was the subject of much pleasant comment. Shakespeare, desiring to turn to account every opportunity to reform and satirize indirectly, where self-interest, and that prevailing servility of the age which he shared, prevented his doing so directly, was ever on the look-out for a novel or comedy on which to build a play, which might allow him to castigate the follies around him, and at the same time, in the richness of their nature, afford a field of revel to his own luxurious and glowing imagination. Plautus's "Monsieur de la Roche" was translated in England by Mr. Warner, and in France, Regnard, and Rostrom, and Le Mercier, and the Abbé Le Monnier, founded comedies upon it. It was translated into Spanish and Italian, and represented in Ferrara as early as 1486. It was said that, even before Shakespeare's time, it was performed in England. For him it possessed a peculiar attraction. Plautus's "Monsieur de la Roche" resided in Epidaurum—a name which implies "that all who entered the city were damned." It sadly needed the Epidaurum of the Romans, on conquering it, changed the name to Dyrrhachium. London, in Shakespeare's time, was not much better. It was then under the merry reigns of constables. The constables whom he introduces in his "Comedy of Errors" are the same as those who abounded, in his time, in the Cal-de-deces of Bow-st., as now in Regent-st. or Leicester-square; and the profligacy and coarseness with which he clothes characters in a city on the Coast of Illyria were, unfortunately, as applicable to those who dwelt upon the banks of the Thames. It was only in this indirect way he could ridicule and scourge the vices around, and accomplish the unvarying object of searing under his wit, and jest, and humor, a moral which might live when the laughter which his pleasant disguises raised had passed away. As Plautus improved on the Greek, Shakespeare improved on the Roman. And as his fancy was too copious to find full field in the description of Plautus, he adds to the laughable imbroglis into which the twin-brothers are thrown by being unknown, by placing their two attendants in an exactly similar position. After having, with an exactness of fancy, playfully created this two-fold confusion, he seems to revel in it with a perfect delight; as some merry, roguish girl twists and turns a knot of thread, with bewitching malice, into a thousand entanglements, and, after reveling with wild wantonness in the confusion she has worked, shouts with joy as, with quick ingenuity, she again untwines the knot, and sets free the captive strands. The fresh delight of joyous girlhood could hardly surpass that of Shakespeare, as he weaves this web of confusion, and again, with conjurer's skill, unravels it. At every step in "The Comedy of Errors," Shakespeare drops some bright, startling phrase. Here a pun—there a cunning quibble—next a spicy word and a quaint saying, until the stage glitters with their light, and men go away

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PUBLIC MEETINGS.

BOARD OF COUNCILMEN.

WEDNESDAY, April 18.—Present: D. D. CONYER, President, in the Chair, and fifty-seven members.

By Mr. CURRY.—Of Joseph L. Greely and others, to compel the Sixth and Eighth-ave. Railroad Companies to complete their track to Vesey-st. and Broadway, and carry passengers to and from that point, in accordance with the terms of their grants. To Committee on Railroads.

By Mr. C. S. GORHAM.—Of Edwin J. Brown and others, to compel the Sixth and Eighth-ave. Railroad Companies to complete their track to Vesey-st. and Broadway. To Committee on Railroads.

REPORTS.

The report of Board of Aldermen, to give Engine No. 18 to Company No. 33, was called up, and a motion to reconsider was adopted.

The resolution that Hose Company No. 25 be acquitted of the charge of speculating with Corporation property, was called up, and lost.

On motion of Mr. JACKSON, the Board adjourned to Thursday, at 6 o'clock, to take up the consideration of the report as to the City Hall.

RESOLUTIONS.

The preamble and resolution of Mr. Clancy, providing that the ordinance passed by this Board Feb. 16, 1855, and by the Board of Aldermen March 19, 1855, and approved by the Mayor March 29, 1855, restricting the selling of liquor on Sunday, and imposing a fine of \$100 on each offender, be, and the same be, rescinded, read, and was called up, and after debate, adopted, 34 Yeas to 23 Nays.

By Mr. WAINWRIGHT.—Preamble, with resolution, to notify all persons now holding licenses for the sale of liquors in the City and County of New-York, which are dated to expire before the 4th of July next, that they must fail and virtue up to the 4th of July, 1855. Referred to Council to Corporation to report whether the Common Council have power, under the late act, to pass such an ordinance.

By Mr. WILD.—That the use of the Chamber of the Board of Councilmen be permitted, on Saturday evening next, to the friends of Charles A. Peck, and other Americans now imprisoned or under duress, and deprived of their liberty in the Island of Cuba. Adopted, and reconsidered, and laid on the table.

By Mr. WILD.—That the use of the Governor's Room be tendered to the Committee of the Legislature appointed to report upon the most efficient procedure in the City of New-York. To Committee on Repairs, &c.

By Mr. SCHENCK.—Preamble, stating the want of room at Washington Market, with resolution that the Council to the Corporation report whether a market can be erected on the new land opposite without the land being sold by the City.

By Mr. HANDEL.—That a Committee be appointed for the celebration of the approaching Anniversary of our National Independence. To Committee of the Whole.

DEBATES.

On the Resolution to continue Licenses to the 4th July next.

Mr. WAINWRIGHT moved to refer to the Corporation Council.

Mr. SCOTT moved to lay on the table. Lost by 22 Yeas to 34 Nays.

Motion to refer to Council carried.

On the Resolution to allow the use of the Chamber of the Board to be given to the friends of Dr. Peck, and other Americans who are confined in Cuba, to hold a meeting on Saturday evening.

Mr. McCABILL moved as amended that Cuba be annexed to the United States. [Laughter and loud applause.]

Mr. WILD urged the adoption of the resolution, on the ground of doing anything that aided an American cause. He would do anything in the righteous cause of an American confined in the dungeons of the Moro Castle, whether he was a native born or an adopted American.

Mr. McCABILL and others seconded the resolution. Carried by 28 to 17.

On Mr. Clancy's resolution to rescind the ordinance forbidding the sale of spirituous liquors on the Sabbath.

Mr. CLANCY contended that the ordinance had been passed under the conviction that it would prevent the passage of a Maine Law. As the Maine Law had been passed, he thought the ordinance should be repealed, in order to give those who have a stock of liquors on hand a better opportunity of disposing of them. As it is, the ordinance is of no practical value.

Mr. CLANCY argued that rum and rowdiness should not be allowed to get into the ascendant on the Sabbath. He thought it would be useless to rescind the ordinance; even if the resolution passed the Council and Aldermen, the Mayor would not rescind it.

Mr. WILD contended that the ordinance was a necessary one, and that it would prevent the passage of the Maine Law, which had been passed. He denied that the ordinance had no practical effect at present, as stated by Mr. Clancy.

Mr. WILD said that about two millions were invested in the rum traffic in his District. Before the Maine Law was passed there were not more than two in his District who kept their rum-shops open on the Sabbath. Since the Maine Law has been passed, he has seen many of them open on the Sundays. As he thought the dealers should have an opportunity to get rid of their stocks, he voted in favor of the resolution.

Mr. PURDY thought the ordinance one of the best ever passed; that it would protect the people for the Maine Law; and he therefore voted against the resolution.

Mr. MAXWELL said he had voted for the ordinance in every place; but the ordinance had been found nugatory, and therefore he voted for the resolution.

Mr. MAXWELL contended that the ordinance was nugatory; it was now based on a false premise, in imposing a legal fine, and was therefore nugatory.

The resolution was adopted by 35 to 23.

A motion by Mr. BRUSH to postpone reconsideration indefinitely was lost by 34 to 24.

A motion to reconsider the vote on the resolution was lost by 24 to 23.

Mr. BURNETT, in voting, expressed his surprise, grief, and astonishment at the course pursued. The ordinance was lately adopted at the express desire of the Chief Magistrate.

On the motion to reconsider the resolution giving the use of the Council-room to the friends of Dr. Peck, Mr. BURNETT said that he had been referred to the Spanish Government, and that it would therefore be indecorous in the Common Council to express any sympathy in the matter, even so far as to give the use of their room.

Mr. COOPER hoped the Board would recall their vote. He thought it wrong to give the use of the room to a prominent crowd, who might damage the furniture.

Mr. WILD undertook to pay any damage that might be done. He asked if all did not stand on the same soil, and breathe the same air. Let them come, he said. This spot is not too sacred to take action against insults to the American flag.

Mr. BURNETT was in favor of reconsideration.

Mr. RINDER asked Mr. WILD whether the room was wanted for the use of a secret order.

Mr. WILD answered that it was wanted for the order of right, but for no secret order.

Mr. RINDER said that some called the use of the room to the friends of the gentleman would be a secret order to associate. He would not give the use of the room to those who would abuse it and its contents. The use of the room had often been refused.

The motion to reconsider was carried, and then the resolution was rescinded by 37 to 23.

On the motion to rescind the resolution of the Board of Aldermen, to give the use of the room to the friends of the gentleman, Mr. WILD moved to rescind the resolution. Carried by 37 to 23.

COMMITTEE ON THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

The Fire Department Committee of the Board of Aldermen met in the City Hall last evening. Aldermen Howard, Baird and Trowbridge, and the Chief Engineer present.

The charge against Engine Company No. 44, for running on the sidewalk, was dismissed, only one man having hold of the jumper, while going to a fire during a heavy snow.

Hose Company No. 9 admitted the charge of running on the sidewalk.

The Committee suspended for two months the following members of Hose Company No. 29, for committing an assault upon Hose Company No. 47.

John Hannell, Jacob M. Hannell, Jacob H. Miller, John B. Cooper, Morris N. Roberts, Samuel P. Sherwood, John Quig, Thomas Smith, George Needham, Lewis B. Place, Patrick Brown, Wm. Murphy, Chas. F. Patterson, and Cornelius O. Rice.

John D. Left, was suspended for two months, for running Hose Carriage No. 2 upon the sidewalk.

COMPLAINT AGAINST THE CHIEF ENGINEER.

Engine No. 33 charged the Chief Engineer with disobeying a resolution of the Common Council ordering him to give to them the Engine formerly used by No. 18. The case stands thus: The engine was built for No. 18, but that Company was abandoned shortly afterward, when the engine was abandoned to the Common Council for the engine. No. 18 applied for the engine to be referred to the Chief Engineer, who gave the apparatus to No. 14. When that Company received their own engine back from Philadelphia, a resolution was passed through the Common Council to give engine No. 14 to Company No. 33.

The Chief, instead of obeying this resolution, gave the engine to Company 33. Engine Co. 33 then used it as an attachment, and the Chief refused to give it as it was being brought home from a fire. The Chief gave bonds to produce the engine when called upon to do so, and the matter is now before the Courts.

Engine Company 33 then petitioned the Common Council to have the engine given up to them. The petition was referred to this Committee, and came up for action last evening. The petition was read.

Ald. HOWARD said: What do you say to the charge, Chief Engineer, that you refused to give the engine to the Common Council?

CHIEF ENGINEER—Before I will allow upon to answer the charge, I demand that proof be offered.

Mr. THEODORE E. TOMLINSON appeared as counsel in behalf of No. 33. He inquired how it happened that a public officer like the Chief Engineer, who ought to set an example of obedience to the law to the Department, should be so openly defying the Common Council and refusing to obey their commands? He wished to know why the Chief had refused to give No. 33 the Engine formerly belonging to No. 18.

The Chief said he had given his reasons to the Common Council, in a communication setting forth that the two lower districts would be left unprotected, by sending the engine above Fifth-st., as that would leave only four engines in the two districts. He demanded proof that he had disobeyed the Common Council.

Mr. TOMLINSON said engine 33 only wanted what was their right; they came to get the engine which the Common Council gave them; if the Chief said he had not been served with a copy of the resolution, they were prepared to prove that he had; or they would serve him with it there and then.

Ald. HOWARD to the Chief: It would be better for you to bring proof that you have not disobeyed this resolution, or else state your reasons for not obeying it.

CHIEF—I have stated my reasons to the proper authority. I sent a communication to the Common Council, and the Aldermen have since rescinded the resolution.

Ald. WILD—This Committee is the proper authority. Your communication was ordered on file. This charge against you was referred to us for investigation. Why have you to say for not obeying the order of the Common Council? You know the rescinding of the resolution by the Aldermen does not alter the case.

CHIEF—I have stated it to the Board, and now I want them to prove the charge.

Mr. TOMLINSON—What charge do you want us to prove?

CHIEF—You say I have arrogated to myself powers that don't belong to me.

Mr. TOMLINSON said the truth is the Chief has only made the very reasonable mistake of supposing that he is before and above the Board of Aldermen, the Board of Councilmen, and the Mayor—in short, superior to the whole City Government. [Laughter.] The Committee will have to report in accordance, for the Chief refuses to answer their question.

CHIEF—Does the Committee wish that communication produced?—I have only heard from the Chairman as yet.

The Committee expressed a wish to hear it read, when the Clerk read it. (We give its substance above.) The communication closed with "I am ready to obey all just and reasonable orders from your honorable body."

Mr. TOMLINSON contended that by his own language the Chief was bound to give up the Engine to No. 33. Ald. HOWARD asked the Chief if he had any defense to make.

CHIEF—They say in their petition that I was ordered by the Mayor to give them the engine. That is all.

FERMAN of 35—I took a note to the Chief from the Mayor to that effect.

CHIEF